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SUBJECT: JAPANESE MORNING PRESS HIGHLIGHTS 12/30/09

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ARTICLES:

(1) Interview with Noboru Yamaguchi, National Defense Academy professor, on gravity of Japan-U.S. alliance - Closeness more important than equality

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)  
December 30, 2009

There are only a few people in the United States who are earnestly endeavoring to deepen the Japan-U.S. alliance. If those people lose trust in Japan due to the issue of relocating the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station, we will have as serious situation on our hands. That is because, after all, some aspects of the maintenance and management of a bilateral alliance depend on the people. The question of Okinawa's base burden must be resolved. But if the United States thinks Japan is not a reliable partner, negotiations will not move forward. In that respect, the handling of this issue is of great importance.

Although some are calling for moving Futenma Air Station outside

Okinawa, this option is difficult from a military perspective. The Marine Corps consists of the command, ground combat unit, air force unit, and logistics support unit. The Futenma base is being used by the air force unit that supports the ground combat unit. Moving this base outside Okinawa is tantamount to putting the shoes outside the entrance to a house.

There are also many problems with relocating all of the Marines to Guam. In Guam, it would be difficult to act in concert with U.S. Seventh Fleet ships in Yokosuka and Sasebo and with Kadena Air Base in Japan.

Against all odds, Washington has accepted Tokyo's request for the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan, including the relocation of Futenma Air Station. It is expected that the implementation of the existing plan to relocate Futenma to the city of Nago in Okinawa will entail much difficulty. But if the government looks for other sites, it will be 10 to 15 years before a conclusion is reached. It is realistic to consider relocation to Nago, which was picked after much discussion.

The Japan-U.S. alliance involves several thousand American youths risking their lives to defend Japan during a contingency. Since contingencies rarely occur, it is difficult for Japanese people to comprehend such a reality. On the other hand, misconduct by U.S. service members and accidents involving stray bullets from U.S. military maneuvering ranges are very noticeable. This situation can easily breed discontent.

Some people believe that the current state of the Japan-U.S.

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alliance is comparable to the U.S.-ROK alliance under the previous Roh Moo Hyun administration. The Roh administration is said to have undermined the U.S.-ROK relationship. Nevertheless, the Roh administration successfully relocated a U.S. base away from central Seoul while strengthening the U.S.-ROK alliance by sending troops to Iraq and Afghanistan. It can be said that the Roh administration achieved sufficient results in relations with the United States.

The Hatoyama administration has declared that it will aim for a close and equal Japan-U.S. alliance. Equality is fine, but closeness is also important.

(2) Government working team to meet in early January to deal with serious effects of child pornography

MAINICHI (Page 3) (Abridged)  
December 30, 2009

Satoshi Chiyozaki, Koichi Tanno, Kazuya Suzuki

There has been an unabated increase in child pornography portraying the sexual abuse of children under 18 years of age. Japan has been criticized by the international community for its slow response, but the government's Cabinet Meeting on Anti-crime Measures will hold the first meeting of its working team in early January and make serious efforts to clear its reputation. Meanwhile, attempts to amend and tighten the law prohibiting child prostitution and child pornography with regard to the possession of (pornographic) images have plunged into further confusion and impasse since the change of administration.

One particular child pornography incident this year came as a great shock to the police.

The Miyagi Prefectural Police arrested in November a 46-year-old unemployed man for shooting pornographic images of a one-year-old baby girl at his house in Tokyo. The baby's 31-year-old mother was actually the one who handed her to the man. The man inserted his penis into the girl in front of the mother and recorded the scene. At least eight other mothers were found to have done the same thing.

This man, who is obsessed with child pornography and collecting underwear, became acquainted with the mothers because they were

selling their own underwear through a cell phone website for this purpose. He offered these women money in exchange for allowing him to take pictures of their children. Nearly 10,000 pornographic photos were found on the man's computer.

There has been an increase in child pornography incidents involving the children's own parents. A senior investigator says that the background to this is that "the tendency to regard children as sex objects has become widespread." He explains that "stricter law enforcement alone will not be sufficient."

In reality, the number of prosecutions and indicted suspects for child pornography offenses and the number of victimized children marked an all-time high in 2009. The National Police Agency (NPA) is worried that if nothing is done about the low level of public awareness, increasingly younger children may be victimized and child pornography may come to involve increasingly brutal acts like in Western countries. While the NPA has been looking for ways to

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cooperate with the concerned ministries, some ministries are cautious due to their consideration for Internet-based businesses. A unified strategy is not yet in place.

However, in light of the serious effects of child pornography on the victims, a working team was finally launched on Dec. 22. This body will formulate the government's first comprehensive policy by next summer. After the Cabinet Meeting on Anti-crime Measures decided to set up the working team at its meeting, National Public Safety Commission Chairman Hiroshi Nakai said: "I am ashamed that Japan is probably regarded as the most lenient country on child pornography (among the advanced nations). The Hatoyama administration will make every effort to eradicate child pornography," declaring his determination.

Steps to prevent the dissemination of and access to child pornography images on the Internet are expected to be the main measures to be taken. These measures aim to instill widespread awareness that "child pornography is absolutely impermissible." The NPA, which will play a central role in the working team, will appoint new devoted anti-child pornography officers. A senior vice minister of the Cabinet Office will serve as the chair of the team, and bureau chief-level officials from nine ministries will participate.

While measures are now being taken at the government level, deliberations in the Diet on the amendment to the law prohibiting child prostitution and child pornography have been in disarray since the change of administration.

With regard to the legal amendment, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and New Komeito, which were in favor of regulating even "simple possession" or collecting images for personal viewing, and the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), which was reluctant about such restrictions, submitted separate amendment bills to the Diet under the LDP-New Komeito administration. Through discussions on revisions to these proposals, the two sides were near agreement on regulating "simple possession" when the House of Representatives was dissolved.

A number of DPJ, LDP, and New Komeito Diet members who participated in the revision discussions have attempted to have the agreed bill passed at an early date after the change of administration. However, there is a persistent opinion in the LDP and New Komeito that, "We should submit a new bill with the best provisions now that we are in opposition" (in the words of LDP Lower House member Sanae Takaichi). Therefore, these two parties re-submitted their original bill from before discussions with the DPJ, and this has been carried over to the regular Diet session next year.

Furthermore, the Social Democratic Party, which has been the most hesitant about the legal amendment, is now a ruling party. This has exacerbated the ambiguity of the ruling coalition's position.

(3) Poll on family

Questions & Answers  
(Figures in percentage, rounded off)

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Q: Do you support the Hatoyama cabinet?

Yes 54  
No 29

Q: Which political party do you support now?

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) 40  
Liberal Democratic Party (LDP or Jiminto) 19  
New Komeito (NK) 3  
Japanese Communist Party (JCP) 1  
Your Party (YP or Minna no To) 0  
People's New Party (PNP or Kokumin Shinto) 0  
Reform Club (RC or Kaikaku Kurabu) 0  
New Party Nippon (NPN or Shinto Nippon) 0  
Other political parties 0  
None 28  
No answer (N/A) + don't know (D/K) 7

Q: To what extent are you satisfied with your daily life now? (One choice only)

Very satisfied 8  
Somewhat satisfied 59  
Not very satisfied 27  
Not satisfied at all 5

Q: How would you classify your standard of living? (One choice only)

Upper-upper class 1  
Lower-upper class 2  
Upper-middle class 14  
Middle-middle class 45  
Lower-middle class 23  
Upper-lower class 10  
Lower-lower class 4

Q: To what extent do you feel uneasy about you or a member of your family losing a job or suffering an income cut? (One choice only)

Very 31  
Somewhat 46  
Not very 17  
Not at all 4

Q: Do you think "family" is a source of comfort in today's society?

Yes 67  
No 27

Q: On the whole, do you think family ties are stronger than before, weaker than before, or remain unchanged?

Stronger 26  
Weaker 33  
Unchanged 39

Q: To what extent do you think family ties are important? (One choice only)

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Very important 67  
Somewhat important 30

Not very important 2  
Not important at all 1

Q: What do you think the ties that bind a family are? (One choice only)

Family name, family register 2  
Biological ties 29  
Living together 30  
Financial ties 4  
Emotional ties 33

Q: Do you think each family member needs to make efforts to protect family ties, or do you think family ties can be protected even if each family member does not make efforts?

Each family member needs to make efforts 92  
Family ties can be protected even if each family member does not make efforts 6

Q: Do you think it would be better for a family to spend time together as much as they can, or do you think it would be better for a family to feel free to spend time on their own?

Better to spend time together 67  
Better to spend time on their own 26

Q: What is your ideal image of a family? (One choice only)

Father-centered family 36  
Mother-centered family 12  
Happy family 43  
Free family 6

Q: Do you think Japan today is a society in which people can work while maintaining a balance between work and family life?

Yes 14  
No 82

Q: Do you think it would be better to strengthen government restrictions on corporations and other entities so that people can work while maintaining a balance between work and family life?

Yes 54  
No 32

Q: Do you think marriage has more benefits for men in Japan today?

Yes 50  
No 40

Q: Do you think marriage has more benefits for women in Japan today?

Yes 47  
No 43

Q: Do you think people should get married if possible, or do you think people do not necessarily need to get married?

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People should get married if possible 52  
People do not necessarily need to do so 44

Q: Do you agree that people, when they get married, should try to give up their own free time or what they want to do for the sake of their family?

Yes 47  
No 44

Q: Do you agree that people should not get married unless they can expect to earn a steady income?

Yes 56  
No 35

Q: There are more and more people marrying late in life or not marrying at all. To what extent do you think this is problematic for Japan today? (One choice only)

Very 31  
Somewhat 49  
Not very 16  
Not at all 2

Q: What do you think is the reason why there are more and more people marrying late in life or not marrying at all? (Up to two)

Young people cannot get steady jobs or income 38  
People's values about marriage have changed 39  
People are expecting more from one another 10  
There are more women who can support themselves 39  
Living alone has become convenient 24  
There are more people who prefer to live freely 31

Q: Do you think a husband or wife should mainly (1) earn money for a living, (2) do housework like cooking and cleaning, and (3) raising children, or do you think the husband and wife should share these roles equally?

(1) (2) (3)  
Husband 63 1 1  
Wife 0 51 23  
Share equally 35 46 74

Q: (Only for men) Would you like your wife to be a full-time homemaker?

Yes 41  
No 53

Q: (Only for women) Would you like to be a full-time homemaker?

Yes 31  
No 62

Q: The tax burden of a man whose wife is a full-time homemaker is lighter than that of a man whose wife is not. Do you think this is appropriate?

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Yes 69  
No 23

Q: This question is about "common law marriage" in which a man and a woman live a married life as a matter of fact without registering their marriage with a public office. Do you consider common law marriage to be a type of marriage?

Yes 51  
No 44

Q: When compared with a married couple, a man and a woman choosing common law marriage are subject to disadvantages in such aspects as taxation. Do you think it is necessary to make this distinction?

Yes 54  
No 36

Q: Do you approve of amending the law so that a married couple can choose to use the same surname or separate surnames of their own free will?

Yes 49  
No 43

Q: Under the current legal system, a man or a woman must change his or her surname when they get married. In this regard, some people view this as inconvenient at workplaces or elsewhere. Do you agree with this view?

Yes 45

No 47

Q: Some people believe that family ties will weaken when separate surnames are allowed for married couples. Do you agree with this opinion?

Yes 39

No 55

Q: Some people believe that society will become confused if different surnames are used in a family or for other reasons when separate surnames are allowed for married couples. Do you agree with this opinion?

Yes 63

No 32

Q: If separate surnames are allowed for married couples now, which surname would you like to choose? Would you like to use the same surname or prefer to use separate surnames?

Same surname 83

Separate surnames 10

Q: Under the current legal system, a child born to an unmarried couple is subject to disadvantages in terms of inheritance when compared with a child born to a married couple. Some people believe that this legal system should be changed so that a child born to an

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unmarried couple can be treated the same as a child born to a married couple. Do you agree with this opinion?

Yes 58

No 29

Q: Do you think Japan today is a society in which it is easy for people to raise children?

Yes 18

No 75

Q: Do you feel reluctant to ask others like babysitters or neighbors to help with child rearing?

Yes 31

No 65

Q: Do you think children should only be disciplined by their families, or do you think they should be disciplined not only by their families but also by their schools and local communities?

Only their families 40

Not only by their families but also their schools and local communities 56

Q: What do you think parents should teach their children? (One choice only)

Individuality, self-reliance 12

Knowledge, competitiveness 2

Thoughtfulness, cooperativeness 53

Courtesy, social morality 31

Q: How long do you think parents should support their children financially? (One choice only)

Up to the age of 15 or so (until graduation from junior high school) 2  
Up to the age of 18 or so (until graduation from high school) 31  
Up to the age of 20 32  
Up to the age of 22 or so (until graduation from university) 32  
Beyond the age of 22 1

Q: Which opinion is closest to yours about the cost of child rearing?

Support from the local community is required for child rearing, so the public burden should be increased 53  
Individuals should be responsible for child rearing, so the public burden can be kept at the current level 42

Polling methodology: The survey was conducted Dec. 5-6 on a face-to-face basis. For the survey, a total of 3,000 persons were chosen from among the nation's registered voting population on a stratified two-stage random-sampling basis. Valid respondents totaled 1,893. In their breakdown, males accounted for 47 PERCENT and females 53 PERCENT .

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